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SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN VIEWS IN ADVANCE OF THE GAERC

REF: 6/4/09 EUR ERA EMAIL

Polchief met June 10 with Klaus Famira, MFA European Correspondent, to discuss the upcoming GAERC. Famira offered the following views:

-- Syria: GAERC participants will discuss whether to move forward with the EU-Syria Association Agreement, taking into account Syria's generally hands off approach to the Lebanese elections. However, they are expected to put off any final decisions until a subsequent GAERC.

-- Cuba: During the annual Cuba review, GAERC participants will discuss a range of issues that will include human rights concerns. There is broad agreement to continue the EU-Cuba dialogue, but the EU is divided among "hardliners," who want to apply greater pressure on issues such as political prisoners, and "moderates," like Austria, who favor a more "patient" approach. Famira does not expect the discussion to result in any changes to EU Cuba policy.

-- Western Balkans: GAERC participants will discuss a report by ICTY Chief Prosecutor Brammertz indicating that Serbia's cooperation with the ICTY has improved, while Croatia's has declined. The EU will adopt a statement with language declaring that the transition in Bosnia from the Office of the High Representative to an EU Special Representative could take place by the end of the year "if conditions are met."

-- Burma: Participants will discuss the arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi. The EU has prepared a statement that will be released when the court issues a verdict in her case.

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